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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 002579

SIPDIS

FOR DS/DSS, DS/IP/ITA, DS/IP/WHA, DS/IP/OPO, DS/OPO/OSD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: CARJACKING OF U.S. MISSION VEHICLE AND ABDUCTION  
OF FSN EMPLOYEE

11. (SBU) Summary: At approximately 1700 hours on Thursday, 12/22/2005, a USAID-employed Foreign Service National (FSN) was returning an official vehicle to the USAID warehouse when he was intercepted by a pickup-truck occupied by five masked gunmen armed with automatic weapons. Three of the gunmen forced entry into the USAID vehicle and ordered the FSN to drive them away. The remaining two assailants followed in their truck. The gunmen, who took the FSN's national identification card, watch, and USAID-issued radio, demanded to know the addresses of his American supervisors. The FSN told them that he did not know this information and begged for his life, stating that he had an ill nine-year old son. The assailants and the FSN spent the entire night in the vehicles, which were parked on the side of the road in a local neighborhood. The following day, the gunmen ordered the FSN to drive to his house and pick up his son. They then drove back to the area that they stayed the previous night and the FSN, his son, and one gunman remained in the pick-up all day while the other four gunmen left in the USG Suburban. The FSN and his son were released, without injury, at 1800 hours on Friday 12/23/2005. The official USG vehicle was apparently abandoned the same day has since been recovered by the local police. End Summary.

12. (SBU) At 1200 hours on 12/24/2005, USAID EXO Neil Kester notified Acting RSO of a carjacking of an official USAID vehicle and of the abduction of the FSN driver. At 1300 hours, RSO, USAID EXO, RSO FSNI, and USAID FSN motorpool supervisor interviewed the driver. The following details were obtained: At approximately 1700 hours on Thursday, 12/22/2005, USAID storekeeper Oscar Cruz Bonilla, a 15-year employee of the Mission, was returning an official Mission vehicle, a grey Chevrolet Suburban with license plates MI-3623, from the USAID building to the USAID warehouse. While making the final turn to the warehouse, which is about one mile from the main USAID building, a blue, single cab Toyota pickup-truck with tinted windows and without license plates intercepted the FSN's vehicle. (The only identifying plates on the vehicle was a rear basketball vanity plate bearing the name "Jordon"). Before the employee could react, five masked gunmen pointed their weapons at the employee and forced entry into the vehicle. Two of the attackers were armed with Uzi submachine guns and the other three carried revolvers. According to the FSN, all of the gunmen were wearing military-style boots and were wearing blue jeans. Additionally, at least some of the men, all described as Honduran males aged 35-40 years with local accents, wore military type backpacks. Two of the assailants had identical, blue snake tattoos on both of their upper arms. Three of the gunmen remained in the Suburban (two in the front seat and one in the rear) and ordered the FSN to drive away while the remaining two gunmen followed in their pickup-truck.

13. (SBU) Both vehicles drove to a location near the city dump, in an area known as Olanchao, about a 20-minute drive to the east of Tegucigalpa. They parked on the side of the road, tied-up the FSN, and demanded that the FSN tell them the addresses of his American supervisors. The FSN stated that he did not know this information and begged them not to kill him as he had a sick nine-year old son at home whom he needed to take care of. All five attackers and the FSN stayed all night in the vehicles, remaining in the same location on the side of the road in Olanchao. According to the FSN, the conversation was limited. They attackers continually pointed their weapons at him and prodded him for information about the locations of his supervisors' residences. The FSN repeated that he honestly did not know that information and pleaded with them to spare his life.

14. (SBU) At 0700 hours the following morning, on Friday 12/23/2005, the FSN complied with their orders to drive all of them in the USG vehicle (leaving the pick-up truck behind in Olanchao) to the FSN's residence in order to verify that he indeed had a sick child. The gunmen remained in the Suburban and ordered the FSN to go into his house alone and retrieve his son. They told him not to alert anyone inside or they would kill him. The FSN went inside, got his nine-year old son, and returned with him to the awaiting vehicles. The FSN, as ordered, did not alert his wife of the

situation. The five gunmen, the FSN, and the FSN's son then drove back to their previous location in the Olancho neighborhood. At approximately 0800 hours, four of the gunmen drove off in the USAID Suburban while the FSN, his son, and one gunman stayed behind in the attacker's pick-up truck. They remained in the truck all day, until approximately 1800 hours.

15. (SBU) When the FSN did not show-up for work that day, USAID personnel attempted to ascertain his whereabouts. Likewise, the FSN's wife, not knowing where her husband or child were, became worried and initiated her own search. Meanwhile, at 1800 hours, both the FSN and his son were released and walked back to Tegucigalpa. Before granting their release, the FSN was told not to report the incident to the police and that if he did, they would return to kill him as they know where he lives. The USG vehicle, which apparently was involved in a minor traffic accident the same day, was abandoned and has since been recovered and is located at a local police storage yard.

16. (SBU) According to the FSN, he believes that his attackers are professional robbers, judging from their mannerisms, the firearms that they were using, and their attire. He stated that the area of the abduction, near the USAID warehouse, was deserted at the time of the attack and that there were no witnesses. When questioned as to a possible motive for the carjacking and abduction, the FSN theorized that his attackers perhaps took the USG vehicle for use in other criminal acts during the day on Friday, when the four gunmen drove off in it. (RSO note: The RSO will follow-up on this theory and attempt to determine if indeed the police have knowledge of any incident where the USG vehicle was involved. Also, the FSN added that the assailants told his son that they were policemen. This information, although remotely possible, remains unverifiable. End RSO note) The FSN, fearing for his safety and for the safety of his family, does not wish to appear in person to report this incident to the local authorities. RSO will submit a report, however, to the local police detailing the events that occurred and reporting the description of the attacker's truck. Additionally, RSO has notified the LGF and the Surveillance Detection team, and has placed additional LGF patrols on the three American USAID supervisor's residences. All three American supervisors have been notified of the situation.

17. (SBU) RSO will continue to monitor this situation closely and will work with the local authorities in recovering the USG vehicle and in the subsequent investigation. USAID is also offering support to the employee and to his family in light of this traumatic experience. Point of contact for this matter is Acting RSO Robert A. Rentz.  
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